

★ CURRENT MEMBERS ★

David Scott
1946–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
DEMOCRAT FROM GEORGIA

2003–



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE MEMBER

A 28-year veteran of the Georgia legislature, David Scott won election to the U.S. House in 2002 as a centrist Democrat representing a newly created district in suburban Atlanta. Scott's appeal in a racially mixed district illustrated the revolution in southern politics that occurred after the 1960s civil rights movement, when large portions of his district voted for George Wallace. "I want to be viewed as a Representative who happens to be African American, but one who represents all the people," Scott said.¹

David Albert Scott was born on June 27, 1946, in Aynor, South Carolina. His father was a preacher and a chauffeur, and his mother was a maid and a hospital worker. He attended grade school in the northeast, settling with his parents as they took jobs in Scarsdale, New York. The experience was formative. Scott noted, "I learned at a very young age how to have confidence in myself and how to get along with people who don't look like me."² Scott graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English and speech from Florida A&M University in 1967. As an intern at the Labor Department in Washington, DC, he met George W. Taylor, an influential labor management expert. Taylor suggested Scott apply to the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, where Taylor taught. In 1969, Scott received an M.B.A. from Wharton. Scott married the former Alfredia Aaron, the youngest sister of professional baseball's longtime homerun king Hank Aaron. They raised two daughters, Dayna and Marcye.

Scott's political work began in an advisory role when, for several years, he consulted for then-Governor James Earl (Jimmy) Carter of Georgia on revenue policy. In 1972, he worked on Andrew Young's successful congressional campaign. Two years later, Scott was elected to the Georgia house of representatives, where he served through 1982. He then was elected to the Georgia senate, where he served from 1983 until 2002—eventually chairing the prestigious rules committee. He authored a law that gave breast cancer patients and their doctors ultimate control over determining hospitalization and treatment measures to combat the disease as well as a law that allowed local communities to fight landfill developments.³

David Scott entered the race in 2002 for a newly reapportioned U.S. House district that surrounded metro Atlanta, including large parts of Fulton, Gwinnett, and Clayton counties. The district—the result of the spectacular growth of suburban Atlanta in the 1990s—also reached into eight other surrounding counties, drawing in communities that had seen a rise in the African-American population during the 1990s. The new district was 42 percent white, 41 percent black, and 10 percent Hispanic. Largely middle class with affluent pockets, it had a strong Democratic tilt. Scott faced two formidable rivals, a former state Democratic Party chairman and a popular state senator, whom the Party backed in the primary. Scott also tapped his experience as an advertising executive—organizing a billboard campaign that reached thousands of drivers who used the major interstates that crossed the spidery district. Scott prevailed in the primary and won the general election with 60 percent of the vote. He was re-elected in 2004 with no major party opposition, and won 69 percent of the vote in his successful 2006 campaign.⁴

After Representative Scott was sworn in to the U.S. House in January 2003, he received assignments on the Financial Services Committee and the Agriculture Committee. By the start of the 109th Congress (2005–2007), he was the second-ranking member on the Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture. In the 110th Congress (2007–2009), Scott joined the Foreign Affairs Committee, where he serves as Vice Chair of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee. He is also a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Blue Dog Coalition, and the New Democrats.⁵

In the House, Representative Scott has earned a reputation as a problem solver. “It’s very important that our party do two things,” Scott told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* just weeks after he took his seat. “One, we’ve got to command the center. Secondly, we’ve got to energize our base.”⁶ He was one of just a handful of Democrats to vote for the Medicare overhaul bill, which provided prescription drug benefits for millions of American seniors. Among Scott’s legislative undertakings have been his lead sponsorship of H.R. 916, the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act, which provides student loan assistance to attorneys who work in public service, as well as the Financial Literacy for Homeowners Act, which seeks to increase homeowners’ knowledge about their mortgages. Further, Representative Scott sponsors annual health fairs and jobs fairs to help bring wellness and economic assistance to his constituents.

FOR FURTHER READING

“Scott, David,” *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S001157>.

NOTES

- 1 Jill Cox, “Crossover Appeal: David Scott Represents a New Breed of Politicos Who Cross Racial Lines to Win Elections,” October 2002, *Atlanta Tribune: The Magazine* 16 (No. 5): 30.
- 2 *Politics in America, 2006* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2005): 302.
- 3 *Politics in America, 2006*: 303; “Official Biography of U.S. Representative David Scott,” <http://davidscott.house.gov/biography> (accessed 26 September 2005).
- 4 “New Member Profile: David Scott (D),” 9 November 2002, *National Journal* (Vol. 34, No. 45); Henry Farber, “Scott Got Head Start on DC Connections,” 14 November 2002, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: 4J1; “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” available at http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/index.html.
- 5 “Official Biography of U.S. Representative David Scott,” <http://davidscott.house.gov/Biography/> (accessed 26 October 2007).
- 6 Melanie Eversley, “New Faces in Congress—David Scott: Bridge Builder Keeps Open Door to All Viewpoints,” 25 February 2003, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: 1B.